In regard to Sanskrit, it is well-known that the grammar of Sanskrit has a logic and that logic is very very amenable to computerisation. This is what we have come to know through research. In fact, we know about it. Those who know Sanskrit also know about it. Those who are knowing Sanskrit for the first time, but know computers already, they are discovering it for the first time there. So, there is no difference of opinion on that. There is nothing for us to do. But we will certainly see how the computers can be made use of in the teaching of languages starting from Sanskrit. But that is a little way down the road.

Construction of Airports at Salem and Tuticorin

*142. SHRI K. GOPALAN:
SHRI V. GOPALSAMY:†

Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether any decision has been taken for the construction of airports at Salem and Tuticorin; and

(b) if so, what are the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF LABOUR (SHRI JAGDISH TYTLER): (a) and (b) A proposal for construction of airports at Salem and Tuticorin, in consultation with the National Airports Authority, has been initiated by the Government of Tamil Nadu. The proposal is, at present, at a preliminary stage.

SHRI V. GOPALSAMY: It is a very misleading statement to suppress the truth. To make a political capital for the ruling party here and to hoodwink the people of Tamil Nadu, the statement goes to create an impression as if the proposal has been initiated by the Tamil Nadu Government recently under the stewardship of the agent of the Central Government, i.e. the Governor of Tamil Nadu. This proposal is there for more than ten years. In the year 1980, the then Civil Aviation Minister gave an assurance on the floor of this House and also gave an assurance in Tuticorin itself, when he met the press, that the runway would be constructed before the end of 1980 and the airport would be ready before the end of 1981. Eight years have passed since then. Now the Government says that it is at a preliminary stage and the Government of Tamil Nadu has initiated the proposal recently. Is it a fact that the Central Government is not prepared to spend any amount for this project and it expects the State Government to meet it through their expenses?

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Put your question please.

SHRI V. GOPALSAMY: I would like to know from the hon. Minister for what reasons does he expect the State Government to meet the expenses when his Government has constructed many airports in Calicut and in other places with its own funds. I would like to ask on one more point. Ten days back a delegation visited Tuticorin. The head of the delegation has stated the length of the runway even if it is constructed would be restricted only for the landing of AVROs and the Tuticorin airport may not get the distinction of receiving Boeings from the first day of its operation, which the newly opened Calicut airport has got. Therefore, I would like to know from the hon. minister whether the statement of this delegation is a final decision of the Government or a runway for the Boeings will be constructed. I would like to know from the hon. Minister about the funds aspect also.

SHRI JAGDISH TYTLER: I would like to inform the hon. Member that the reason why the projects which are taken up by the National Airports Authority and which could not

†The question was actually asked on the floor of the House by Shri V. Gopalsamy.

be taken up was the lack of funds. It is no doubt that the project in Tuticorin—the first part of your question—was taken up many many years back and the then Minister of Civil Aviation in 1980 had said that we would like to take it up in 1981. But because of lack of funds they could not take it up. It is only as recently as April 1988 that a correct position was arrived at. Before that we had sent the proposal that the State Government should build it up and hand it over to the National Airports Authority so that at least looking after the runway, after it is constructed and handed over, will be done by the National Airports Authority. It was, in principle, accepted. But somehow or other because of lack of allocation of funds and funds not being with the State Government, nothing came out of it. In April 1988, the last meeting which took place with the Adviser, Dr. Siddhu, who was also the former Civil Aviation Secretary, the present position was arrived at that they will develop the land, get the land, hand it over to the National Airport Authority and will also provide other facilities like water, electricity, roads etc. As soon as it is handed over to us with 50 per cent of the cost, we will make sure whatever assurance the Government gives, that assurance will be fulfilled. But no assurance can be fulfilled or made because there is no money with the National Airports Authority. We have to see the Budget. It is not that the Government has no plans.

Now, coming to the second part of the question, for getting a runway for the airport or for having Boeing service first of all, a passenger survey has to be done. First let us go in for a smaller capacity aircraft. If we find that the capacity is more, then, looking at the Budget, we can go in for expansion of the runway for Boeing.

SHRI V. GOPALSAMY: Madam, a survey has been done ten years ago and it was given to understand that a full capacity aircraft like the Boeing would operate from Tuticorin Airport. Now, this argument of paucity of funds is advanced only for the State of Tamil Nadu. Madam, is it a colony of India? (*Interruptions*). You have commissioned many airports after this demand was put forward by Tamil Nadu. Another runway site is very much available near Tuticorin. It was built during the Second World War by the British. That is readily available in Kayattar. We were assured that a Vayudoot service would be started very soon. It was assured last year as an interim arrangement. What happened to that Vayudoot service from Kayattar runway? I would like to know it from the Minister.

SHRI JAGDISH TYTLER: I am very sorry that the hon. Member should have called the Tamil Nadu Government that. I do not even want to repeat it. Last time also, I remember, he said something which should not have been said here. You should not make national issues political issues and take advantage of them.

SHRI V. GOPALSAMY: You should have asked for funds from the Tamil Nadu Government.

SHRI JAGDISH TYTLER: When I was the Minister of Civil Aviation, I wrote to the State Government that we did not have funds and the State Government had accepted to do it. You should try to get your State Government to do it. I have also explained the present position.

SHRI V. GOPALSAMY: You have given funds for Calicut Airport.

SHRI JAGDISH TYTLER: I am talking about these things.

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Shri V. M. Jadhav.

SHRI V. GOPALSAMY: Madam, he did not answer my question regarding the Vayudoot service. (*Interruptions*)

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: The Minister will be good enough to answer if.... (*Interruptions*)

SHRI V. GOPALSAMY: It is a stop-gap arrangement for two days for Mr. Tytler.

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Shri V. M. Jadhav.

SHRI VITHALRAO MADHAV RAO JADHAV: I am happy that the Vayudoot service has been started from so many places. Through you, Madam, I would like to bring to the notice of the hon. Minister the fact that various airports where the Vayudoot service is started are not in good condition. Vayudoot service is there in Bombay, Aurangabad and Mandovi Airports. Mandovi Airport for example, is not in good condition. Likewise...

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: The question is about construction of airports in Salem and Tuticorin.

SHRI VITHALRAO MADHAVRAO JADHAV: My question is general about the construction of airports. Is there any policy decision on the part of the Government that where there is heavy traffic, airports will be constructed immediately and where the airports are not in good condition, they will be repaired and maintenance and proper utilisation of airports will be taken due care of?

SHRI JAGDISH TYTLER: Yes. There is a scheme for the repair of and all. I have a full list of them. It runways and other terminal buildings runs to 33 airports totally. We have got a proposal for 1988-89. We are spending money on this.

SHRI N. E. BALARAM: I am asking about Cochin Airport. What will happen to that airport? Are you going to make it an international airport?

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: The question is not about this.

SHRI N. E. BALARAM: He asked about Vayudoot service. I am extending the question. ...

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: You are not allowed.

SHRI N. E. BALARAM: Has he got any programme to improve the Cochin Airport? There are a number of complaints about that airport.

SHRI JAGDISH TYTLER: Is it improving the airport or expanding the runway?

SHRI N. E. BALARAM: I am talking about the runway.

SHRI JAGDISH TYTLER: It is not possible in the present financial year. We require about Rs. 30 crores to expand the runway. So it is not possible at the present juncture.

SHRI N. E. BALARAM: Can the Government of India think of another location?

SHRI JAGDISH TYTLER: If I go in for another location, it will need another Rs. 100 crores.

SHRI VISHWA BANDHU GUPTA: I am happy that Tamil Nadu is going to have now an extra airport. I would like to know from the honourable Minister as to the policy that he has about priorities. How does he select a particular site for an airport? Secondly, will he see to it that these airports in which we are going to put the National money—whether the money comes from the National Airports Authority or otherwise—are of international standards I don't mean the standard of expenses; I am talking of the facilities even though they may be small. Will he take into consideration the fact that new technology has come and that the airports which are now to be built should be of international standards? Will this be part of his policy?

SHRI JAGDISH TYTLER: With whatever funds there are available, in any airport which is constructed, whether it is building a major runway

or other, it should conform to specific well-set norms; they cannot go beyond those norms.

SHRI T. R. BALU: Is there any possibility of connecting Tuticorin and Kayattar so that Tuticorin will be airlinked with the rest of India?

SHRI JAGDISH TYTLER: This is a question relating to airports.

Chartered Air-Flight for Haj

*143. SHRI RAOOF VALIULLAH: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether the programme of chartered air flights for Haj, 1988 has been finalised; if so, by when the first outward flights from Bombay and Delhi are likely to start;

(b) whether there are other centres in the country from where Haj chartered flights operate; if so, the details thereof; and

(c) whether it is a fact that Saudi Airlines has declined to participate in the programme, and if so, whether Government have drawn up any contingency plan to avoid confusion and chaos at the last moment?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF LABOUR (SHRI JAGDISH TYTLER): (a) to (c) The matter has not been finalised as yet.

SHRI RAOOF VALIULLAH: The answer given by the honourable Minister is as strange as it is disappointing. Members of Parliament and members of the Central Haj Committee have been repeatedly sending flight plans to the Ministry of Civil Aviation to finalise the programme and still Government comes to the floor of the House and says that the matter has not been finalised. I know what the reasons are for not finalising the programme even at this late stage. That is one. Secondly, two days ago the honourable Minister of State for External Affairs, while addressing the Central Haj Advisory Board, made a shocking statement that this year the Haj will be a costlier affair and that the airfares will also be raised. What he said was that Air India was running in loss and it has not increased the Haj fares in the last four years. This is not true. I am also a member of the Central Haj Committee. Government had unilaterally raised the fare in 1984 by Rs. 500, in 1985 by Rs. 527 and in 1986 by Rs. 710. Why should you raise the fare? The impression given to the people of this country is that the fare was not raised in the last four years. Now I want the Minister to give an assurance that this year the fare will not be raised.

SHRI JAGDISH TYTLER: I can only say that looking at the fuel price going up and other facilities being provided for the air flights, it is important that we raise the fare. Now, even after raising the fares, the fares are such that you do not make any profits. I would like to inform you that even last year we ran in loss on the basis of the Haj fare of last year. I do not have the exact figures out Air India underwent a loss of roughly a few lakhs of rupees. But even then I would like to inform you that whenever Haj flights have been arranged, actually many flights from regular routes have been taken away and Government of India, through these Air India and Indian Airlines flights having been taken away from regular schedules, have gone in for major losses which they could have easily avoided by not giving the flights to the Haj people.

SHRI RAOOF VALIULLAH: Is this an answer as if Government is obliging us? We are paying more than Rs. 7000 and 20,000 Hajis per year are lifted from Bombay, Calcutta and Madras and are sent to Jeddah. Each one of them pays Rs. 7000 and that too two months in advance. Can you just give me another example of a client who buys 20,000 tickets at a time and pays the money two months in advance? You give me another